A Couple's Ritual

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A Couple's Ritual

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Summary

Set within the Net-Game universe.

"My lunch keeps going missing from the break room"-AU.

"What the fuck?!"

Slamming the refrigerator door closed, I buried both hands in my hair and pulled. This would make... the third day in a row that my lunch had gone missing from the break room! First it was the roast beef sandwich I had tenderly handcrafted. Then it was the omelete. And now? My precious ramen. I'd even taken the time to hide it behind a triple-stacked bento that I could only assume was Gamagoori's.

It was an absolute travesty and there was only one person I could think of who would be involved in such a dastardly act.

"Oy!" stomping up to a wooden door, I pounded my fist against it before peering in through the window slot. Barely able to make out a blur of pink before the door was wrenched open and all the air left my lungs. Courtesy of a harsh jab to the gut, "Oof!"

"You lukewarm cold cut!" I managed to divert Nonon's next jab with a swipe of my forearm.

"Me?! You're the lukewarm cold cut, you- you-" nothing was coming to mind, "ramen abductor!"

Nonon's face went devoid of emotion. "Alright. Good bye Matoi. Please keep your word-making fart-hole closed while I'm recording."

Glancing over her and into the room I spotted a bowl on a table, sitting precariously close to a microphone. Steam rising off it in slow pirouettes. "See!" while pointing at the offending meal, I pushed passed Nonon and into the room. Confirming with my own eyes that it was a freshly warmed serving of ramen. "You did steal my lunch!"

"Unless your lunch was the noodle cup I brought with me today," and as Nonon spoke she pointed at a discarded styrofoam cup in a trashcan by the door, "you've got the wrong person."

"Then why is it in a bowl?" the question came out snide and prideful. Eliciting an exaggerated eyeroll from Nonon as she moved to the table and picked up the meal.

"Oh please. You know how Lady Satsuki gets when we don't use proper eating ware," she looked into the bowl and sighed.

"Ah," I exhaled pointedly in understanding. "She can be a little crazy at times. But that still doesn't explain why you're eating ramen in your recording studio?"

As if it made sense, Nonon leaned over the bowl and used a pair of chopsticks to slurp obnoxiously at a length of noodles. Once she had swallowed them down she moved to the panel of switches and slides, tapping at a specific button to playback the noise. Her fingers dexterously moving to adjust the controls on the panel until it had slowed the noise down and distorted it thoroughly. "Slug noises."

"I, uh," blinking was about all I could muster at the uncanny turn of events, "didn't know there were slugs in the next game."

"Some kind of- slug- humanoid- things. Now," standing from where she had seated herself at the console as she worked, Nonon moved to push me from the room with what little strength she had, "please leave. Go bother someone else, Matoi."

"But-" jamming my foot in the way, I blocked the door before she could close it, "my ramen!"

"Oh for the love of-" she pulled the door slightly open and slammed it on my foot, "go ask your girlfriend!"

Howling in a mix of rage and pain, I hopped on my good foot while nursing my other. "Bitch!"

By the time the pain, and swelling, had ceased, I'd gotten enough time to cool my thoughts. Nonon was right. The next logical route of my revenge-filled lunch tour would be to approach the boss lady. Albeit, I'd have to be careful. She'd likely be swamped in meetings, her own lunch time cast to the wayside in favor of keeping the studio sailing smoothly.

Or, at least, that's what I had always envisioned would be the case.

"Erh, Satsuki?" with puppy dog eyes cast to the floor, I'd heard the sound of her slurping before looking to find her covering her mouth with an open palm. An attempt at remaining polite despite the last few inches of noodle she sucked into her mouth. "Are... are you eating ramen for lunch?"

"Mnn-" she finished chewing before responding. Always so civilized. "Yes."

"Did you happen to get that from the break room fridge?"

"Of course." At her response I could start to see the dots connecting.

"An- uh. Brown bag? With my name on it?"

"Yes?"

"Eurgh!" turning slightly I braced my palms against the back of my neck. "Why?! Why've you been eating my lunches?!"

When I looked back, Satsuki was staring at me with a bewildered expression. "Your lunches? I thought you were making them for me."

"Wha- wh-" before I could answer, Satsuki interjected.

"I made you a lunch, as well. Is it not a typical couple ritual to do so?"

All I could do was blink at her in response. "You... what?"

"I put it in the fridge. It has my name on it."

It didn't make much sense, but instead of continuing to stand there and argue with her, I decided to investigate the situation myself. A low buzzing noise still lurking at the back of my mind even as I wrenched the refrigerator door open. Confirming that the only lunch left was the enormous three-tiered bento. The name tag on it reading in elegant handwriting the name, "Kiryuin Satsuki".

Carrying it back to Satsuki's office had been more difficult than coming to terms with the entire situation.

"Shit, Sats. What the hell did you make me for lunch? Rocks?" she snorted behind her monitor. Not even taking the time to look up as I unwrapped the fine purple silk from around it.

"Admittedly, I had thought you were dissatisfied with my cooking abilities. Every day the lunches I made went untouched."

I shook my head vigorously before responding, all while unstacking the bento to reveal layer after layer of gourmet-class food. "This was all a giant misunderstanding from the get-go. Could you just tell me your hare-brained schemes next time? You're terrible at surprises."

"That is... fair." she glanced up a moment to watch as I jammed an entire croquette into my mouth. Reveling in how it managed to retain its moistness despite being chilled. "Good?" Even with a mouthful of food I still managed to respond.

[&]quot;Amazing."

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